THE NEWS LETTER

BRINGING INFORMATION TO THE TEACHER ABOUT THE RADIO, THE PRESS, AND THE MOTION PICTURE

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THE RADIO WORKSHOP

At a quarter after two on Tuesday, February 18, a hundred thousand schoolboys in classrooms from the Alleghenies to Colorado, from the Lakes to the Gulf, gathered around the radios in several thousand classrooms. They were scheduled to hear another lesson in American history. What they actually listened to was a radio drama, written especially for them, produced with professional skill, acted by a competent cast, accompanied by music appropriately selected and cued. The broadcast series was entitled "Men Who Made History." That day's dramatization was entitled "Mightier Than the Sword." It concerned a man of whom probably not one student in a thousand had heard.

The locale of the drama was accurately set by a fifteen-piece orchestra playing "Sidewalks of New York." The dramatic action followed the one-man crusade of Thomas Nast, an obscure cartoonist, against the notorious Tweed ring. The audience heard Nast plead with the *New York Times* for editorial support, heard an ignorant ward politician order all Harper-published textbooks thrown out of the schools of New York to discipline the publishers for printing Nast's cartoons. They listened as Tweed withdrew his support from Tilden, whom he had promised to support for the presidency. Similarly, they heard Tilden turn against the ring as he delivered transcripts of fraudulent entries in the city treasury's books to the editor of the *Times*.

They sat in with the *Times's* editor as he dictated the story that exploded a bombshell in Tammany Hall, heard the presses turn and extras called in the street; they shared the joy with which Nast read the news and the alarm with which it was received in Tammany Hall. Vicariously, they felt a righteous thrill as Tweed and his henchmen were placed under arrest to stand trial for the iniquities that Nast and the *Times* had exposed. This was no ordinary history lesson. It was history as seen by an eyewitness; more vividly presented than the most able teacher could hope to.

What does it mean to a grade-school student to relive with Thomas Nast the heartbreaking days when he crusaded alone, or to follow the little-known Mark Carlton—another man who made history—through days of privation and uncertainty as he watched the first crop of Durum wheat ma-

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Editors—EDGAR DALE
I. KEITH TYLER

STUDENTS from four high schools in Trumbull County, Ohio, selected after careful tests for correct speech, enunciation, pronunciation, and of voice quality, are broadcasting historical and literary plays twice a week from station WKBN at Youngstown. The county superintendent, John C. Berg, reports that "wonderful interest is being developed and a great deal of educational value is being derived" from these radio presentations.

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THE Cleveland public schools use more than five thousand classroom films each month. Some films have been shown as many as two hundred times but, thanks to care, are still in first-rate condition.

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CARRIER pigeons for the transmission of news may, to the American, seem a primitive device," writes Marlen Pew in the *Editor and Publisher* for February 8, "but I recently marveled at the service leading Japanese newspapers are getting from these faithful feathered creatures. . . . In Japanese cities one need only look skyward from any central point to locate a newspaper office, for scores of pigeons will be seen wheeling over the roof, returning from assignments, or stretching wings in preparation for a flight.

"Up to five hundred birds are owned and operated by each publishing house. They are the typical gray-green birds commonly owned by carrier fanciers in the United States, and are capable of flights of from 50 to 150 miles, carrying a news dispatch of photographic films. A seasoned bird

will ordinarily beat an airplane to the office. The pigeon has the distinct advantage of flying right into the editorial rooms, whereas the plane must land on the outskirts of the city, automobile or motorcycle completing the transmission through crowded streets."

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A STUDY of thirty-one courses of study by a committee of the National Council of Teachers of English revealed that twelve of the courses made no provision for study of magazines in the classroom. Nine courses showed definite provision for magazine work, and ten partial provision.

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THE cheapest locations for motion-picture work are at military reservations. The cheapest that is for the producer. The taxpayer eventually foots the bill. Several alert organizations are now awake to this fact. The magazine *Variety* reports that the Junior Screen Actors' Guild, the Los Angeles Central Labor Council, and the American Federation of Labor have complained to Secretary Woodring of the War Department and Secretary Swanson of the Navy Department about the Government's free granting of equipment, military bases, and personnel to private motion-picture companies for the production of features such as Annapolis Farewell, and West Point of the Air. Protests emphasized that studios saved tremendous amounts by getting the Government to pay—at public expense—not only for talent, but also for gasoline, sets, costumes, and equipment. Another not unimportant point is that with such production-value properties available to producers for the asking, it becomes all but imperative that the service be made glamorous.

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THOSE interested in radio education who live near Columbus should save May 4, 5, and 6, the dates on which the Seventh Annual Institute for Education by Radio will be held on the campus of Ohio State University. Both educators and broadcasters are invited to attend. The emphasis throughout the meetings will be on techniques—the "how" of radio education. Administration of programs, script-writing, broadcasting, classroom radio use, and adult listening groups will be selected for clinical demonstration and analysis. Advance copies of the detailed program may be obtained by writing the Institute for Education by Radio, Ohio State University, Columbus.

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FILMS that tend to cause distrust between nations were roundly condemned recently by Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. Speaking before the National Conference on the Cause and Cure of War, held at Washington, Mrs. Roosevelt told of receiving a letter from a person who wanted the Government to "do something" about such films.

ture? If radio can inspire one schoolboy to a career one-half as fruitful as that of Nast, or Carlton, or any of our other biographical subjects, the experiment of Ohio State University in educational broadcasting will have paid for itself many times over.

History and biography are not the only fields of instruction that the Radio Workshop of the University is exploring for broadcasts to schoolrooms. Two discussion groups have been organized. One group composed entirely of high-school students, under the leadership of I. Keith Tyler, is appearing in a program series entitled "The High-School Student Talks It Over." Four students take part in a panel discussion on various subjects of interest to young people and about which they should be informed. Discussion topics have included "Leisure-Time Activities," "The Movies," "War," and "The High School."

On alternating weeks the Workshop presents a series known as "The High-School Student Looks at the World." Here specialists discuss current problems. In order, however, to keep the discussion on the proper level and to relate it particularly to the classroom and to the age-group, the panel includes a high-school student who states his own questions in his own language. Neutrality, freedom of speech, and social security have been considered in this series.

The Workshop has in preparation similar programs for next year in history, vocational guidance, geography, and a course in letter-writing and business English. This new series is being written under Workshop direction by University students, chosen with an eye to their interests and for their ability to present the material effectively. Thus the Workshop gives training in script-writing while building its own programs for schoolroom audiences. Under consideration for the fall, also, are plans for broadcasting opening exercises in which the school will participate, and weekly state-wide teachers' meetings to be scheduled at a time when superintendents can conveniently call their teachers together. In ways such as these the Radio Workshop is endeavoring to serve the elementary and high schools of the state. That it is succeeding is indicated by the fact that twenty-five stations, from Pennsylvania to points as far west as Denver, are picking up the programs and rebroadcasting them.

These activities of the Radio Workshop accord with the policy of its sponsors, the Bureau of Educational Research, the State Department of Education, the Ohio Radio Education Association, and the Payne Fund. The Workshop was set up for the purpose of demonstrating what can be done to promote education by radio over a state-wide area. It is but one of several activities in radio which are being carried on in Ohio by the co-operative endeavor of these organizations.

In promoting education, the Workshop does not restrict

itself to programs for schools. Other experiments are planned to knit the state into a single community by means of radio. For example, the Workshop is considering a Friday-night broadcast of choir rehearsals from a central point so that isolated communities may enjoy the services of a trained leader and benefit from superior direction and expert selection of programs. Similarly, the Workshop proposes to unite by radio all the choral societies of the state into one great chorus to study under skilled direction the same numbers. A massed performance yearly at some central point will be the objective. Standardization? Perhaps, but improvement certainly. Most of all, the experiment is important because it involves co-operation from the listener rather than passive reception, and that is something new in radio.

An effort is also being made, in co-operation with the University station, WOSU, to study and develop new types of educational broadcasts. Several programs of an experimental nature have been launched. The advantages of questions and answers, guest speakers, dramatizations, and student participation are being explored. Such presentations are, to an extent, replacing talks or lectures, and the programs seem to be gaining in acceptance and interest.

Not all the programs are instructional, however. Cultural and inspirational programs have their place in educational broadcasting; so, also, the program that makes no pretensions to being more than entertainment. The educational station must be all things to all people if it hopes to have an audience of any size, and without an audience it is as valueless as a newspaper without a circulation. Entertainment in the plan of the Workshop would be justified on the grounds of audience-building alone, but it has a more important claim to attention. The Workshop must help to train the new crop of radio technicians who will build and present the nation's run-of-the-mill, commercial programs the day after tomorrow. The University will doubly serve the state if it enables these future broadcasters to do a better job than is being done at present.

So, in various ways, the Radio Workshop at Ohio State University is attempting to serve radio education by bringing to educational broadcasts the same professional tone, the careful production and direction that audiences have learned to demand in radio programs. Neither school children nor adult audiences are edified or instructed by dull, uninteresting, amateurish programs. Radio education, if it is to thrive, must take its cue from the professional broadcaster and sell its product as interestingly as the toothpaste manufacturer sells his. Radio can make learning an interesting, thrilling experience, eagerly anticipated and treasured in memory. More education at less cost will be the result if radio will apply the seasoned advice of Alexander Pope: "Men must be taught as if you taught them not."

Meredith Page

"The Government can do nothing about such things," she said. "The only people who can do anything are the people who see it in the theater. If they protest, the thing will disappear. You control the opinion wherever that film or radio program or other thing is seen or heard and you have the power to stop whatever is harmful to good feeling between nations."

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A VERY successful panel discussion on motion pictures is reported by Helen Rand Miller of the Evanston Township High School (Illinois). Included in the discussion were junior– and senior–high-school pupils, citizens, parents, teachers, and a motion-picture exhibitor.

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THE reprint from the February *California Journal of Elementary Education*, "Radio in the Elementary School," is available for free distribution to readers of the NEWS LETTER. A post-card request sent to the author, I. Keith Tyler, Ohio State University, Columbus, will be sufficient.

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TEACHERS who would like to make a survey of motion-picture attendance in their schools or communities will be interested to know that a number of printed forms used for this purpose during the Payne-Fund investigation are still available. These forms are simple in arrangement and easily tabulated. They may be had from Mr. Dale at five cents the hundred, and those who apply promptly will be furnished with as many as desired.

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FIFTY reels of Erpi 16-millimeter sound pictures were recently added to the film library of the Ohio State Department of Education. Films in this library are lent free to Ohio schools. More than two thousand reels were used in February.

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A PENNY postal card will bring you free a copy of any of the following reprints: by Edgar Dale, "Marriage and the Movies," "A Discussion Concerning the Proposed American Film Institute," and "Teaching Motion-Picture Appreciation"; by I. Keith Tyler, "Radio in the High School" and "How to Judge a Radio Program." Mr. Dale has copies also of Russell T. Gregg's "Experiences with a State Co-operative Film Library," an article that appeared in the *Educational Screen*.

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A STUDY of 3,512 children from 54 elementary public schools in New York state made in 1934 showed that one-third of the children attended motion pictures at least once a week, and that 6 per cent of this third went twice each week. Frequency of attendance varied significantly according to age. Among the older children—eleven, twelve, and thirteen years—notably large

percentages frequented the movies two or more times weekly. There was a tendency in all age-groups toward relatively higher percentages of attendance for children from unfavorable homes.

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THREE helpful articles on the preparation of radio talks on home economics appeared in the November, 1935, issue of the *Journal of Home Economics*. These are now available, bound together in reprint form, and may be obtained from the *Journal*, 620 Mills Building, Washington, D. C. Suggestions based on long experience in broadcasting are offered by Judith Waller, of the National Broadcasting Company; Zelta Rodenwald, of KOAC, the state-owned broadcasting station at Corvallis, Oregon; and Helen Crouch Douglass, of the United States Department of Agriculture.

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ENGLAND has grown intensely interested in color, says Lloyd Knechtel in the March issue of the *American Cinematographer*. "New or nearly new color-processes are springing up overnight like so many weeds. As is well known, Technicolor is putting up a plant near London. . . . One of my most interesting experiences came when we were testing the process, and I had the privilege of filming some of the parades held in connection with King George's Jubilee last summer. It was a magnificent spectacle, and with the reds and blues predominating in the flags and uniforms, made a striking color subject."

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AN EXCELLENT opportunity for music educators to become familiar with the radio and the intricate techniques of broadcasting music is offered by the Music Educators Radio Forum. The Forum is sponsored by station WHK at Cleveland, under the direction of Larry Roller, and has contact with some two hundred music supervisors in the northeastern district of Ohio. The second meeting of this organization was held on March 22 at Cleveland, and included, besides discussion, two informative talks and two demonstrations of radio music programs.

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OF WHAT are motion-picture snowflakes made? How are sound pictures recorded? What is a "proxy," and what does a "cutter" do? *Moviemakers* by John J. Floherty answers these questions to the accompaniment of excellent candid-camera shots. The book is labeled "for all ages," but should have special appeal for young people. It is a Doubleday-Doran book and sells for $2.

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THE author of the first article in this issue, Meredith Page, is Director of the Radio Workshop and Research Associate of the Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University.

NEWS OR VIEWS

TEACHERS who have groups of pupils interested in making studies of the content of news reels may find the following data and classifications useful. The findings are for the year 1931–32. It will be noted that in this year the relationship between war-army-navy and world-peace items was twelve to one. Further study in 1933 disclosed seven war items to one peace item, while in 1935 the ratio was about eight war items to one peace item.

TABLE I

TYPE OF SUBJECT-MATTER CONTAINED IN TWO NEWSREELS

CATEGORY	X		Y	
	Rank According to Frequency	Percentage of Different Items	Rank According to Frequency	Percentage of Different Items
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Sports	1	14	1	30
Animals, birds, fish, insects	2	9	12	2
War, army, and navy	3	9	2	12
Aviation (civil)	4	7	4	5
Engineering and scientific marvels and inventions	5	7	20	1
Accidents, fires, storms, wrecks, and disasters	6	6	16	2
Conventions, reunions, contests, parades, festivals, pageants	7	5	5	5
Government and civic officials	8	5	3	10
Economic conditions	9	5	9	3
Curiosities and freaks	10	5	25	0.3
Police and criminal activities	11	4	7	4
Governmental, political, and civic affairs	12	4	8	4
Religion	13	3	19	1
Education and instruction	14	3	14	2
Commerce, transportation, and industry	15	3	18	1
Celebrities	16	2	11	2
Prohibition and liquor	17	2	6	4
Children and their activities	18	2	17	2
Entertainment	19	2	24	0.6
Fashion shows	20	1	15	2
World peace	21	0.7	22	1
Beauty contests	22	0.5	23	0.7
Exploration and adventure	23	0.5	26	0.1
Music	24	0.2	10	2
Scenic splendors	25	0.2	21	1
Dancing	26	0.1	13	2
Total	...	100	...	100

Here are some questions that should be asked in connection with news reels: Why do war items predominate so strongly over peace items? Is the heavy emphasis on sports justified in terms of public interest? How should you rank the various news reels in relation to their fairness and lack of bias in presenting the news?

Edgar Dale

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